A DISSUASIVE FROM REVENGE: IN A DISCOURSE

Upon these Words,

Recompense to no man evil for evil,
Rom. 12. 17.

BY
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lib: Tho: Lincolne ex dono Autoris.

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TO

My Worthy and Beloved Friends,

THE

INHABITANTS

OF

Mancheſter and *Salford*.

THough after much importunity, I was at length prevailed with to quit my Relation to you; yet 'twas not without great reluctancy and uneaſineſs to my ſelf. And that was the true

and only reaſon, why I took no leave of you; for a ſolemn Farewell, as it would have been no real Benefit to you, ſo, I was well aſſured, that it would have added to my own Affliction.

What the prevalent inducement to my removal was, is, I ſuppoſe, well known to your ſelves. As for others, 'tis ſufficient to let them know, that it was not from any unkindneſs to me on your part, nor out of any low or mercena-

cenary reſpects on mine. That I did not conſult my own Eaſe or Profit, or any other little ſelfiſh Intereſt, the Pariſh for which I left you, is an evident argument. And ſo far were you from making me weary of you, by any manner of Diſreſpect or Unkindneſs toward me, that the experience I had of your long-continued and unwearied kindneſs to me, was that, which, above all other conſiderations, kept me ſo long with you, and

made me always very back-ward to hearken to any o-vertures of removing from you.

Do not therefore ima-gine, that I am forgetful of the Favours I have re-ceived amongſt you. I am indeed highly ſenſible of them, and ſhall ever own my ſelf oblig'd to you for them; and in token of my Gratitude, ſhall not only readily accept, but in-duſtriouſly ſeek after oppor-tunities of ſerving you; and ſhall account it a real

additi-

addition to my own, if I may be any way instrumental to advance your Good.

And as I heartily wish your Wealth and Prosperity in all other respects, so I shall especially pray for, and (as much as I am able at this distance) endeavour to promote the welfare of your souls; that they may be prosperous and in health, as your Bodies and outward Estates generally are; that ye may grow in Grace, 2 Pet. 3. 18. *and in the knowledge of*

our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

To which purpoſe I have Printed the enſuing Diſcourſe, and heartily recommend it, not only to your Reading, but to your Practice; beſeeching you to accept it, as a ſmall expreſſion of my great Affection to you.

1 Tim. 1. 5. 1. S. Paul *tells us, that* the end of the Commandment *(that to which the whole Chriſtian Doctrine tends, and in which all its parts are uni-*

ted,

ted, as lines in a common centre) is Charity. *That* Rom. 13. 8, 9. he that loveth another, hath fulfill'd the Law. For this, Thou ſhalt not commit Adultery, Thou ſhalt not Kill, Thou ſhalt not Steal, Thou ſhalt not bear falſe Witneſs, Thou ſhalt not Covet; and if there be any other Commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this ſaying, namely, Thou ſhalt love thy Neighbour as thy ſelf. *As all duties*

of

of Piety are contain'd in the love of God; ſo love to our Neighbour is productive of the whole duty we owe to him. For
v. 10. *as it follows*, Love worketh no evil to his Neighbour: No evil *either in Thought, Word or Deed. For this alone, will cleanſe our hearts from wiſhing any evil to him; this will ſtop our Mouths, from ſpeaking any evil of him; this will hold our Hands, from doing any evil to him.*

Nor

Nor will it only reſtrain us from the working of evil, but it will put us upon the doing of all that Good for him, which we would deſire he ſhould do for us, were we in his circumſtances, and he in ours; and will make us as truly condole with him in his Miſery, and rejoice in his Happineſs, as if we our ſelves were in his condition.

So great a Grace is Charity, ſo comprehenſive, that it carries all other Graces along

along with it; and in proportion to our increaſe in this, will be our proficiency in all the reſt.

We need not therefore wonder that our bleſſed Saviour, (whoſe great deſign was to render his Diſciples exemplary to the reſt of mankind, in all virtuous diſpoſitions of mind) hath ſo much inculcated this Grace upon us, ſo vehemently preſs'd it with the moſt efficacious arguments, and ſo powerfully recommended it to our practice

ctice by his own unparal-
lel'd example. And not
only ſo, but as if this were
that Grace, which above
all other, would adorn our
Profeſſion, and recommend
him and his Religion to
the good eſteem of the
World, he hath made it
the peculiar Badge of his
Diſciples; For by this, *ſaith he,* ſhall all men
know that ye are my
Diſciples, if ye love one
another. Joh. 13. 35.

And this was indeed
the Character by which the
firſt

firſt Chriſtians were conſpicuous and diſtinguiſh'd from men of all other Religions: While they were generally hated and perſecuted, and look'd upon as the filth and off-ſcouring of all things, *ſuch was their love, not barely one to another, but even to their Perſecutors; that the Heathen World ſtood amaz'd at it, and their moſt obſtinate Enemies, were either confounded or converted by it.*

As

As therefore the beloved Diſciple, when by age he was diſabled to preach, ſaid no more to his Auditors, than Little Children love one another, *becauſe this is virtually All; for as it preſuppoſes the love of God, ſo it includes in it our whole Duty to Man, all the ſeveral parts of which, are but ſo many ſtreams which flow from this as their common fountain; ſo in like manner I earneſtly exhort and beſeech you, that*

Rom. 12. 10. *that* ye be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another. 1 Pet. 1. 22. That ye love one another with a pure heart fervently. *That by this means* ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing; *but being readily diſpos'd to every good work, may ſtand* compleat in the whole will of God.

Nor is this charitable temper of ſoul, more advantageous to your Duty, than

than it is to your interest; as it is in its fruits pleasant and profitable, and every way beneficial both to your selves and to your Neighbours. For,

2. *Let this Grace rule in your hearts, and there will be no Strifes nor Debates, no crossing the Designs, nor undermining the Interests one of another; but ye will all conspire as members of one and the same body, to promote each others happiness. For this a-*

lone will expell and ſubdue all thoſe miſchievous Paſſions and inordinate Appetites, that are the great and only diſturbers of your Peace, and will poſſeſs your ſouls with all thoſe benign and gracious Diſpoſitions, that do beget, and preſerve, and increaſe, and continue it.

What are the great Make-bates and Deſtroyers of Peace, but Pride, Envy, Covetouſneſs, Anger, Wrath, Bitterneſs, Revenge, and other ſuch like

like malignant ill-natured Affections? All which are baniſh'd from, and can find no entertainment in that ſoul in which Charity reigns. For Charity envyeth not, vaunteth not it ſelf, is not puffed up, doth not behave it ſelf unſeemly, ſeeketh not her own, is not eaſily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoyceth not in Iniquity, but rejoiceth in the Truth. 1 Cor. 13. 4,5,6,7.

So far is a charitable perſon from repining at his Neighbours Good, that he heartily rejoiceth at it; and were it in the power of his hand to effect, as it is of his Heart to wiſh it, he would leave no man deſtitute of any good, which he could wiſh to enjoy himſelf. And in caſe he do not meet with that good eſteem and kind uſage he may juſtly expect from his Neighbours, as he is not troubled and diſquieted in his

his own mind, ſo conſe-quently he cannot be trou-bleſome or vexatious to them; but ſits down con-tented, chuſing rather to be accounted nothing, than by endeavouring to make himſelf ſomething, to di-ſturb their eaſe and repoſe. He is indeed poſſeſs'd with ſuch a low opinion of his own worth, that he can-not take it ill, if others think meanly of him too; yea the higher he is ex-alted by God in any en-dowments above others,

the lower he debaſes himſelf for the good of others. As he doth not behave himſelf unſeemly to any man; ſo he thinks nothing unbecoming and unworthy of himſelf, by which he may be really ſerviceable to the Good of any. And no wonder that he readily condeſcends to the meaneſt employments, for the benefit of his Brethren; becauſe he ſeeketh not his own, but is of ſuch a generous temper, that he ſtudies the Profit of others alſo.

alſo. And being of ſuch a publick ſpirit, he is not eaſily provok'd to wrath, upon the account of any private wrong; as he carefully endeavours not to give, ſo he is ſlow to take Offence; becauſe he is not apt to entertain an ill conceit of others, or to put a bad conſtruction upon their Words and Actions, but will ever interpret that which is doubtful, to the moſt favourable ſenſe: And when it is ſo apparent, that his Neighbour

is to blame, that he cannot wholly excuſe him, yet he will not fail to make allowances for Infirmities, and as far as he can with truth and honeſty, will extenuate thoſe Faults which he cannot abſolutely deny: Yea, though he ſees that his Neighbour is maliciouſly ſet againſt him, and deſignedly does him all the miſchief he can; yet he will not ſuffer the Peace to be broken on his part; but notwithſtanding the utmoſt Provocations, he is meek

meek and humble, and patient and ready to forgive; All the good he receives from his Neighbour, he owns himself indebted to him for, and is ready, as he has opportunity to repay it; but so far is he from repaying of Evil, that he requites it only with Good.

Such are the peaceable fruits of Charity; so that in proportion to the growth of this among you, will be your Peace and Unity among your selves.

And,

Pſal. 133. 1. *And,* O how good and pleaſant a thing is it, for Brethren to dwell together in Unity!

3. *Nor will Charity only maintain Peace among your ſelves, but 'twill alſo keep you from creating any manner of Moleſtation or Diſturbance to your Governours.*

Juſtice teaches you, to
Rom. 13. 7. render to Cæſar the things that are Cæſar's; *yea, to* render to all men their dues, Tribute

to

to whom Tribute is due, Cuſtom to whom Cuſtom, Fear to whom Fear, Honour to whom Honour. *And Charity, which is more liberal and open handed, will be ſo far from not giving them what is their due, that rather than uſurp upon their Rights, it will chuſe to part with its own.*

Beſides, Charity and Humility are inſeparable companions, they mutually beget and nurſe up each other;

other; ſo that by how much the higher you grow in Charity, by ſo much the lower will you grow in Humility.

Now a humble perſon is ſo far from exalting himſelf above thoſe that are over him, that he readily ſtoops to thoſe that are under him. He accounts nothing a greater inſtance of Pride and Arrogance, than to controll thoſe, to whom he is in duty bound to ſubmit; to preſcribe Laws to thoſe, from whom he

he ought to receive them; ſince this is by interpretation, to ſet himſelf above God, whoſe Authority Magiſtrates are inveſted with, and whoſe Vicegerents they are. He leaves it therefore to his Governours to determine what is fit to be impos'd, and thinks himſelf only concern'd to obey; and if it ſometime happen, that he is not able to diſcern the reaſon of a Law, yet he queſtions not, but there is ſufficient reaſon for it, be-

cauſe

cauſe his Superiours (as ſtanding upon higher ground) are able to ſee further than he can. He doth not therefore diſpute, much leſs remonſtrate againſt their Injunctions, but humbly bows and ſubmits to them.

And if he be unhappily brought to this Exigent, that he cannot do what his Governours command, unleſs he break the Commands of the abſolute Soveraign of Heaven and Earth; he will then raiſe no

no oppoſition either againſt their Perſons or Government, but meekly ſuffer what they inflict, as knowing that they are the Miniſters of God, and that whoſoever reſiſteth them, riſeth up in Rebellion againſt God himſelf.

If therefore you are under the power of this Grace, you will not need to be taught, to obey them that have the rule over you; to ſubmit your ſelves to every humane Ordinance, whether Heb. 13. 17. 1 Pet. 2 13, 14.

ther it be to the King as Supream, or unto Governours, as to thoſe that are ſent by him; *becauſe this alone, will ſo effectually diſpoſe you to yield obedience to theſe Precepts, that you will not be able without offering violence to your ſelves, to do otherwiſe.*

But I will not be over tedious, and therefore ſhall remit you to the following Diſcourſe, in which you will find one prime branch of this Divine Grace, (which hath ſo powerful an

an influence for the producing of thoſe forementiond, and many other bleſs'd effects) recommended to your conſideration, Affection and Practice.

Finally, Brethren, farewell: Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace be with you. *I ſhall ever remain,* 2 Cor. 13. 11.

Your faithful and affectionate
Friend and Servant,

Nic. Stratford.

ROM. XII. 17.

Recompenſe to no man evil for evil.

THough no Precept can be more plain, yet we ſhall ſcarce find any that is more generally neglected. So much is the ſin in faſhion that is here prohibited, that he is thought unworthy the name of a Man, who does not practiſe it; and nothing is look'd upon as a more undoubted argument of a poor, cowardly Spirit, than patiently to paſs over,

and tamely to put up an injury.

Yea, ſo far are many from not *recompenſing evil for evil*, that they *recompenſe evil for good*; they *curſe* thoſe *that bleſs them, and deſpitefully uſe thoſe who* moſt heartily *pray for them.*

And though 'tis true, that in all Ages men have been more or leſs propenſe to this evil practice, yet in the preſent Age, by reaſon of a more than ordinary concurrence of many unhappy Cauſes, more irreconcileable Diſſentions, more implacable Animoſities, more bitter Envyings; in a word, more ill nature and malignity of temper are to be found, than former-

merly; by reaſon of which, men are more ſtrongly bent, more impetuouſly hurried, both to the doing and repaying of injuries one to another. And therefore a Diſcourſe upon this Subject, is now more eſpecially ſeaſonable, in order to the calming of mens inraged paſſions, the ſweetening of their imbitter'd Spirits, the reſtoring of peace, the reviving of Charity, and the putting a ſtop to the further growth of this unchriſtian practice.

And that the inſuing Diſcourſe may by the grace of God be effectual to theſe great and bleſſed ends, after I ſhall have firſt ſpoken ſomewhat briefly of the practice

here prohibited, declaring the import and extent of it; I ſhall ſhew you how ſinful and fooliſh, how irreligious and unreaſonable it is, by ſuch Arguments, as may be of force to convince your judgments, and to work your Wills and Affections to an utter averſation from, and abhorrence of it.

1. As to the firſt; that which is here prohibited, is in the general, the repaying of *evil for evil*. For the more full underſtanding of which, and the right ſtating of our Duty, I ſhall briefly ſhew theſe *four* things.

1. The extent of the *evil* here forbidden to be recompenſed.

2. How

2. How many wayes a man may be ſaid to *recompenſe evil for evil.*

3. That the Prohibition reaches to all men, of what degree or quality ſoever. Or, that no man is permitted to *recompenſe evil for evil.*

4. No, not to any man; there being no man in the world, to whom any man in the world, may *recompenſe evil for evil.*

1. *Firſt*, The evil here forbidden to be recompenſed, is not this or that evil only; but evil indefinitely, and without limitation; and ſo is comprehenſive of all ſorts and degrees of wrong that one man can receive from

another. Whether it be that evil which is hurtful to his Mind, as Grief and Vexation; Or to his Body, as Stripes and Wounds; Or to his Goods, as Theft and Rapine; Or to his Reputation, as Reproach and Slander. Whether it be the evil of the Hand, or of the Tongue; Or but ſo much as the evil of the Eye, the envying the happineſs of another, or wiſhing that miſchief may befall him, which he before wiſh'd might fall upon us. In ſhort, there is no kind of evil that one man can do to another; and therefore no miſchief that one man can receive from another, that the *evil* in the Text does not extend

extend to; and conſequently no kind of injury that we are not here forbidden to *recompenſe*.

2. *Secondly*, We may *recompenſe evil for evil* theſe two ways. Either *Firſt*, by repaying evil in the ſame kind; as by returning blow for blow, railing for railing. Or *Secondly*, by repaying it in ſome other kind; as by puniſhing another in his Eſtate, for the Injury he hath done us in our Body or good Name. And this Recompenſe may be made either by our ſelves, or by procuring that it be done by others. That a man ſhould be his own avenger, was not permitted by God to the *Jews*. For that

Law

Exod. 21. 22,23,24. Law of Retaliation, requiring *eye for eye, tooth for tooth, wound for wound, ſtripe for ſtripe*; the execution of it was reſerv'd to the publick Magiſtrate upon complaint made by the injur'd party. And therefore it cannot be ſo much as imagin'd, that ſuch a liberty as this ſhould be indulg'd to Chriſtians, whoſe hands are more cloſely and ſtrongly tied up from retaliating of injuries than the *Jews* were.

Nor is it enough for a Chriſtian not to repay himſelf, the wrong he hath receiv'd; but he is moreover oblig'd, not to procure or endeavour, no nor ſo much as deſire, that it may be repaid

paid by others. Some perſons, who readily grant, that they may not avenge themſelves by their own hands, think they may be allow'd to do it, by the Miniſters of publick Juſtice: in caſe therefore of any injury received, their next work is to addreſs to the Magiſtrate, and under the ſpecious pretences of Law and Juſtice, to wreak their Revenge upon their offending Brother; Whereas this is in truth, to *recompenſe evil*, as much as the other; for though the Executioner be not the ſame, yet what difference is there, as to the thing it ſelf, whether a man receive the ſame wound, from my own hands,

or

or from the hands of another that are ſet on work by me ? He doubtleſs is as highly criminal before God, who procures an evil to be done by another, as he that doth it himſelf. And therefore this falls under the prohibition in the Text no leſs than the former.

But becauſe in matters of wrong, a man may lawfully in ſeveral Caſes fly for Sanctuary to the Law (though never for repaying the wrongs received, and that he may be even with his Adverſary) for prevention of miſtakes, and in order to your further ſatisfaction, I ſhall in a few words tell you, what is permitted to a Chriſtian in this

this caſe, and from thence infer what it is that is here forbidden.

Firſt, A man may lawfully defend himſelf, and his juſt Rights, againſt the aſſaults of an injurious perſon. Thus S. *Paul* did again and again; One while we find him pleading his priviledge as a Citizen of *Rome*, and under the protection of the *Roman* Laws, ſecuring himſelf from the evil deſigns of his Adverſaries. At another time we hear him appealing to *Cæſar*, when *Feſtus*, to gratifie the *Jews*, would have deliver'd him up into their hands. 'Tis not therefore defenſive, but offenſive weapons that we are

Act. 22. 2.

Act. 25. 10, 11.

are forbidden the uſe of. We may by all innocent means, endeavour to ſave our ſelves from hurt; though we may not ſo much as wiſh the miſchief of our Neighbour, how injurious ſoever to us.

Secondly, We may lawfully require Reſtitution or ſatisfaction, for the damage we have ſuſtain'd, and in caſe the Offender be ſo unjuſt as to deny it, we may by the aſſiſtance of the Magiſtrate extort it from him. But with theſe *two* Cautions.

1. Provided, that the damage be conſiderable; for to create trouble and charges to another for a ſlight trifling intereſt,

intereſt, is utterly inconſiſtent with that Meekneſs and Gentleneſs, and Goodneſs and Mercy, which are the conſtitutive ingredients of a Chriſtian. And this is that only which ſeems to be forbidden by our Saviour, *Matth.* 5. *If thine enemy ſmite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other alſo; and if he ſue thee at the Law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak alſo,* &c. But when the loſs is ſuch, as in the judgment of unpaſſionate and diſintereſs'd perſons is valuable; ſuch as if not repaired, may render us leſs able to diſcharge thoſe duties that either in our private or publick capacities are incumbent upon

on us, we may then exact an amends from him who was the cauſe of it.

2. Provided the Offender be able, either in whole, or at leaſt in part, to make reparation. For to proſecute him who has done the wrong, in caſe I know he is utterly unable to make any part of amends for it, can be nothing elſe but purely to render *evil for evil*; becauſe I do evil to him, without doing any good to my ſelf; I add to his burden, and do not at all lighten my own. Yea, that I may make him more miſerable, I make my ſelf ſo too, by putting my ſelf to a fruitleſs expence and trouble, and by expoſing my ſelf as well

as

as my Neighbour, to thoſe many temptations to injuſtice and uncharitableneſs, which a Law ſuit is ever attended with.

But in caſe the Offender be fairly reſponſible for the Wrong he hath done; and the Wrong be ſo burthenſome, that we cannot without much pain and affliction bear the weight of it; I know nothing in the Laws of Chriſt, that forbids us to relieve our ſelves, by exacting ſatisfaction in a legal way from the party injurious.

Provided ſtill, that we do it with a ſingle deſign of repairing our Rights, without any mixture of malice, with-

out any deſire of doing miſchief to the wrong-doer; and that we give proof of our charitable affection toward him, by putting him to no more grief than needs muſt; and by being ready, as occaſion ſerves, to requite his Injuries with kindneſſes. If theſe Cautions be obſerv'd, I think it is no way unbecoming our Chriſtian Profeſſion, to ſeek a reparation of the loſſes we have ſuſtain'd.

3. In caſe the Wrong be not barely to our ſelves, but ſuch as redounds to the damage of the publick, 'tis not only lawful, but it may be our Duty to proſecute the Offender. When our private intereſt

intereſt is ſo wrapt up with that of others, that we cannot relinquiſh our own, without betraying of their Rights; not only in Juſtice, but in Charity too, we may be oblig'd to a legal Proceſs; And becauſe we are bound to prefer the Publick before any particular mans private benefit, we ſhould ſhew our ſelves unworthy of humane Society, ſhould we neglect the redreſs of an injury, that is any way deſtructive of the publick good.

Now, though in the caſes mention'd, much evil may be ſometimes brought upon the delinquent party; yet ſince this evil is that which the perſon injured doth not

ſo much as deſire, much leſs endeavour; but would on the contrary, if it were in his power, prevent; and the only thing he deſigns and endeavours, is the defence or recovery of his own, or the publick Rights; therefore the miſchiefs which unavoidably happen to the Criminal, are not to be imputed to him that proſecutes, but to be laid at his own door.

The thing then that is here forbidden, is, the returning of evil to another, not with a deſign ſimply to repair our own loſſes, or to ſecure the publick good; but on purpoſe to grieve and afflict him, who hath before afflict-

ed

ed us, that we may thereby gratifie our own angry and revengeful humour. When we ſhall wound another in his Body, Goods, or Name, becauſe we have ſuffered a wound from him, though the wound we give, can afford no cure for that we have receiv'd: Yea though in the proſecution of ſuch unworthy malicious ends, we take Sanctuary at publick Juſtice, and require no more than the Law of the Land allows; though there be a neceſſity that humane Laws ſhould interpoſe in matters of this nature; and tho' the Judge may not deny what the Law grants, if we are ſo uncharitable as to demand it; and

though in no human Court we ſtand accuſable for any crime upon this account; yet ſo unworthy a thing is this, ſo much below that noble and generous Spirit that Chriſt came to raiſe and exalt us to, that he thought fit to forbid it, and that not only to ſome, but to all men; which brings me to the next thing propos'd.

3. The perſons to whom this Command is given, are all the Sons and Daughters of men, to whom it ſhall ever come. As the foregoing Precepts, *Let love be without diſſimulation. Abhor that which is evil, cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affection'd one to another*, &c. extend to all men,

men, ſo does this too. And therefore in another Text the note of univerſality is expreſsly annex'd, *ſee that none render evil for evil.* No perſon of what quality or degree ſoever. 1 Theſſ. 5. 15.

Which I the rather obſerve, becauſe I find that ſome perſons, who treat upon this ſubject, do exempt the Magiſtrate; the reaſon is, becauſe he is indiſpenſably bound by virtue of his Office, to recompenſe evil to evil-doers. But this exception ought not to be made. Not that I think the Magiſtrate, is not oblig'd to render evil to thoſe that do evil; but becauſe the evil of Puniſhment inflicted by the Magiſtrate, is

ſo widely different from that of Revenge here forbidden, that if we extend this Command to the Magiſtrate, 'twill be no bar to the execution of his Office.

That therefore I may give the Magiſtrate his due, I not barely grant, but aſſert, that he is commiſſion'd by God, for the puniſhment of evil-doers, as well as for the praiſe of them that do well. This we are taught by the two great Apoſtles, S. *Paul* and S. *Peter*. S. *Paul* tells us, Rom. 13. 3, 4. *That Rulers are not a terrour to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou not then* (ſaith he) *be afraid of the Power? do that which is good, and thou ſhalt have praiſe of the ſame, for he is the Miniſter*

Miniſter of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the Sword in vain; for he is the Miniſter of God, a Revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil. And S. Peter commands us to *be ſubject to every Ordinance of man for the Lords ſake, not only to the King as Supreme, but unto Governours alſo, as unto thoſe that are ſent* (that is, commiſſionated) *by him, for the puniſhment of evil-doers, and for the praiſe of them that do well.* 1 Pet. 2. 13, 14.

Yea, I grant, not only that the publick Magiſtrate, but that Parents and Maſters, and other Superiours in private Authority, are inveſted with power to puniſh thoſe that are

are under their charge, proportionable to the merits of their Offences, in all ſuch caſes as are not reſerved to the publick Magiſtrate. And which is more; that not only wrongs done to others, but even perſonal injuries, or thoſe done to themſelves, by thoſe that are placed in ſubjection under them, may be lawfully puniſhed by a Magiſtrate, Parent or Maſter reſpectively.

But though all this be granted, yet it will not hence follow, but that the Supreme Magiſtrate himſelf is as much obliged to the Duty in the Text, as the meaneſt of his Subjects (and therefore private Governours much rather).

ther). The reaſon is, becauſe the evil here forbidden, is that of Revenge (in the ſtrict notion of it) which both in its Original, Attendants, and Ends, is ſo remote from the puniſhment of Delinquents by perſons in Authority, that a man may daily inflict the one without being touched with the Guilt of the other. For, 1. In Revenge, the perſon who takes it, apprehends himſelf injured, either in his Perſon, or in his Relatives, or in ſome thing that appertains to him: Whereas it rarely in compariſon happens that the Magiſtrate himſelf is injured by thoſe he puniſhes. And ſo far is it from being neceſſary, that it ſhould be ſo, that ſometimes

Epiſcop. de Magiſtrat. c. 7.

ſometimes on the contrary, the perſons puniſhed by him are ſuch as have highly oblig'd him. 2. Revenge derives it ſelf from ſpight or malignity of mind: Whereas the puniſhment taken by the Magiſtrate, proceeds (or at leaſt ſhould do ſo) from good will either to the perſon or to the publick, or both. In all puniſhments both capital and others, from love to the Publick; In all leſs than capital, from love both to the Publick and the Perſon too. And therefore, 3. Revenge is ever accompanied with pleaſure and delight in him that takes it; But Puniſhment is attended with grief and commiſerati-

on

on of mind in him that inflicts it. How often does the Magiſtrate weep when he pronounces Sentence againſt a Malefactor? and the bowels of a Parent yearn over that rebellious Son whom he chaſtiſes? And therefore, 4. Private Revenge and legal puniſhment are greatly different in their Ends. For the End of Revenge is meerly to ſatisfie Anger, or to allay my own, by beholding anothers Grief: Whereas the End of all Puniſhments, that are not capital, is the Amendment of the Perſon puniſh'd; and of all Puniſhments whatſoever, the Terrour of the Example that others may be afraid, and not tempted by impunity

impunity to commit the ſame Offences; and the peace and ſecurity, the good Order and Government of publick Societies.

By what has been ſaid, I think 'tis ſufficiently evident, that Puniſhment and Revenge (in the common ſenſe of this word) ſo widely differ, that though the latter be forbidden to the Magiſtrate, yet that will be no hindrance to the execution of his Office by inflicting the former. And though 'tis true, that the Magiſtrate is call'd *a Revenger for wrath*; Yet the word is there us'd (as 'tis alſo when applied to God) in a larger and more benign ſenſe, and not in its uſual

Rom. 13. 4.

and

and worſt notion. For even the Magiſtrate who executes the Law upon others, in caſe he do it with Spite and Rancour, to vent his own Paſſions, and to eaſe his Spleen, he thereby becomes himſelf, a breaker of the Law of Chriſt.

The ſumm is, To render *evil* to another, meerly becauſe he hath done evil to us; to take Pleaſure in anothers Pain; To think our ſelves more happy, becauſe we have made our Neighbour more miſerable, this is no more allow'd to the higheſt, than it is to the loweſt. Not the greateſt Prince upon Earth, is permitted in this ſort,

to

to *recompenſe evil for evil.* No,

4. *Fourthly*, Not to any man in the world. *Recompenſe to no man evil for evil. To no man*, not to the moſt inveterate and implacable Enemy; Not to a Schiſmatick or Heretick; Not to a *Turk* or *Jew*, no nor to a Heathen; Not to the moſt Irreligious or Atheiſtical wretch in the world: Not to any man of any Nation, of what Quality, State, Opinion, or Religion ſoever, may we thus *recompenſe evil for evil.*

Οὐ γὰρ εἶπε, τῷ πατρῷ μὴ ἀποδῶς κακὸν, ἀλλὰ μηδενὶ, κἂν ἕλλην ᾖ, κἂν μιαρὸς, &c. Chryſoſt. in loc.

The reſult of what hath been delivered is this: That no man in the world may repay

repay to any man in the world, either in the ſame kind, or in another; either by his own hands, or by the hands of others, any manner of wrong or miſchief, meerly by way of retaliation or recompenſe for the injury he has received from him. He may indeed defend his own Rights, he may ſeek the reparation of ſuch wrongs as are weighty and valuable, if the party obnoxious be able to make it: And in caſe the injury be ſuch, (as if no amends be made for it) will redound to the damage of human Society, he not only may, but ought to proſecute the Offender, and bring him to legal puniſhment,

though no advantage accrue to himſelf thereby. But without reſpect to theſe, or ſuch like Ends, to create grief and miſery to another; that is, to do evil to my Neighbour, for no other reaſon, but becauſe he hath done ſo to me, is a thing ſo baſe and unbecoming a Man, that it ought not ſo much as to be named among Chriſtians.

And that it is ſo indeed, I ſhall now ſhew you by ſuch Arguments as will, I hope, be of force to convince you, how both unreaſonable and irreligious, how fooliſh and brutiſh, as well as ſinful this practice is; that you may be thereby wrought

to

to an utter averſation from, and abhorrency of it.

The Arguments being many and various, I ſhall for methods ſake, and to avoid confuſion, reduce them to ſeveral Heads. I ſhall

I. Shew you how repugnant it is to the holy Religion we profeſs.

II. How impious in reſpect of God.

III. How hurtful to our ſelves.

IV. How unreaſonable even in reſpect of our Neighbour who hath wrong'd us.

V. How deſtructive of publick Peace, how pernicious to human Society.

For whether we conſider that Religion to which we owe all our hopes of Happineſs; whether we conſider God, our Neighbour, or our Selves; whether we conſider our own private or the publick good, we ſhall not be far to ſeek for ſtore of ſuch Arguments, as may ſufficiently repreſent to us, how contrary it is to our Religion, how evil in it ſelf, how provoking to God, how hurtful to our ſelves, how prejudicial to our Neighbour, how oppoſite to the publick good, *to recompenſe evil for evil.*

I. No-

I. Nothing can be more plainly contrary to the nature, more inconſiſtent with the deſign of the Religion we profeſs; which is ſo far from being troubleſom and vexatious, hurtful and revengeful; that 'tis on the contrary moſt *peaceable, gentle, eaſie to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits.* More particularly. Jam. 3. 17.

1. To render *evil for evil*, is utterly inconſiſtent, with thoſe gracious Qualities and Diſpoſitions of mind, which 'tis the main deſign of our Religion to plant and promote in us; ſuch are *Humility, Meekneſs, Love, Joy, Peace, Long-ſuffering, Gentleneſs,* Gal. 5. 22.

neſs, *Goodneſs*. Theſe are the Graces by which Chriſtians ought to be known, and diſtinguiſhed from other men, as by their proper Badge and Livery. And therefore S. *Paul* commands us (as we deſire to approve our ſelves *the Elect of God, holy and beloved*) that *we put on bowels of Compaſſion, Kindneſs, Humbleneſs of mind, Meekneſs, Long-ſuffering, Forbearing one another, and Forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel againſt any. And that above*, or over *all theſe, we put on Charity, which is the bond of Perfectneſs*. That is (by an *Hebraiſm* uſual in the writings of this Apoſtle) *a moſt perfect bond*, by which we ſhall be more cloſely ty'd together,

Col. 3. 12, 13, 14.

gether, and intirely made one, than by any other bond whatſoever. And S. *Peter* requires, that *above all things, we have fervent Charity among our ſelves*, and that for this reaſon, becauſe *Charity will cover a multitude of Sins. A multitude* not only of thoſe ſins which are committed againſt God, but againſt our ſelves; and 'twill cover them from our own, as well as from other mens eyes, that we ſhall never ſee them, ſo as to requite them. And that an univerſal Charity extended even to the moſt mercileſs Enemies, is the great Glory and Perfection in which Chriſtians ought to out-ſhine others, we learn

1 Pet. 4, 8.

from our bleſſed Saviour's own mouth, who after he had commanded us to love our Enemies, and propounded the Example of God himſelf to move us thereunto, he concludes, *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.*

Matt. 5.48.

By all which (and much more which might be produced to the ſame purpoſe) 'tis evident, that the Spirit and Temper, which the Goſpel of Chriſt is deſigned to work in us, is as oppoſite to that of Enmity and Revenge, as Light to Darkneſs. For how can he be eaſily provok'd by the injuries of another, who is Meek, and Gentle,

Gentle, and Patient and Long-ſuffering? How can he repay evil to his Neighbour; who notwithſtanding all the evil he hath ſuffered from him, is kindly affectioned toward him? How can he take Pleaſure in the Afflictions of his Enemy, who hath a fellow feeling of his miſeries, as if they were his own? It cannot be, there is an utter inconſiſtency in the thing it ſelf; and therefore were all ſuch as profeſs themſelves Chriſtians, of ſuch a temper as their Religion requires, there could be no ſuch thing, as a thought of Revenge found among them. As will be further evident, becauſe,

2. Nothing

2. Nothing can be more repugnant to the Preceptive part of our Religion. Should we take a particular view of thoſe practices, which are condemn'd by the Laws of Chriſt, we ſhould ſcarce find any that is more contrary to, that bids more defiance to his Commandments, than this does. For,

Firſt, Nothing is more expreſly prohibited; and that not barely once in my Text, but the Prohibition is frequently repeated: *Be ye all of one mind*, ſays S. *Peter*, *having compaſſion one of another, be pitiful, be courteous; Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing.* And S. *Paul* elſewhere

1 Pet. 3.8, 9.

where repeats the ſame Command, with a ſpecial charge prefix'd, to ingage us the more to the obſervance of it: *See* (or look to it) *that none render evil for evil.* 1 Theſſ. 5. 15. The ſame Prohibition is alſo given by our Lord and Maſter: *But I ſay unto you, that ye reſiſt not evil.* Matt. 5. 39. Which ſhould rather be render'd, *avenge not evil*; it being directly oppoſed to the Law of Retaliation before mention'd.

The truth is, if we conſult *Moſes* and the Prophets, we ſhall find, that God anciently forbad this, even to the *Jews*, with reſpect to thoſe perſons who were of their own Nation and Religion,

Thou

Levit. 19. 18. *Thou ſhalt not avenge, no nor ſo much as bear any grudge againſt the Children of thy People.* Which we find afterward repeated by *Solomon*: Prov. 20. 22. *Say not thou, I will recompenſe evil*; Prov. 24. 29. and again, *Say not I will do to him, as he hath done to me: I will render to the man according to his work.* And though in caſe the injur'd party required it, the Magiſtrate was bound by the Law of God, Exod. 21. 23, 24, 25. to render *an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth*; Yet 'tis manifeſt by the Texts before quoted, that God did not approve of this uncharitable temper, though he was to give ſome indulgence to it. And if God did not allow this in a *Jew*, can we think

think that he doth not much more condemn it in Christians? who have many more, and those much stronger motives and obligations to Charity and Forgiveness, than the *Jews* had. For,

Secondly, So far must he be from *rendering evil for evil*, that on the contrary, he must return good for evil. So the Apostle commands in the words before my Text; *Bless them that persecute you.* Rom. 12. 14. And to shew the great weight and necessity of this Duty, he again inculcates it, and expressly forbids the contrary; *bless and curse not.* * He says not,

* Οὐκ εἶπε, μὴ μνησικακεῖτε, μηδὲ ἀμύνεσθε, ἀλλὰ τὸ πολλῷ πλέον τούτων ἐζήτησεν· ἐκεῖνο μὲν γὰρ ἀνδρὸς φιλοσόφου, τοῦτο δὲ ἀγγέλου. Chrysost. ad Rom. Hom. 22.

not, as S. *Chryſoſtom* obſerves, do not remember injuries, neither avenge them; but he requires that which is much more than theſe, Not to avenge is the part of a Philoſopher; but to pray that they may be happy, who do what they can to make us miſerable, is becoming an Angel. And no leſs than this, does our Maſter expect from all his Diſciples; for he himſelf not only counſels, but ſtrictly commands us, *To love our enemies, to bleſs them that curſe us, to do good to them that hate us, and to pray for them that deſpitefully uſe us, and perſecute us.* He ſays not *, do not hate, but love; do not

Matt. 5. 44.

* Οὐ γὰρ εἶπε, μὴ μισήσῃς, ἀλλὰ ἀγάπησον, &c. Chryſoſt. in loc.

not hurt, but do good. And to quicken us to obedience to this Command, he hath more effectually taught us the ſame leſſon by his own Example; in not only forgiving his mortal and moſt malicious Enemies, but praying to his Father to forgive them too.

And this indeed is no more, than what even the *Jews*, (how ill-natured, and hard hearted ſoever) were in a great meaſure obliged to, toward thoſe enemies at leaſt, who were of their own Nation and Profeſſion. For God expreſly commanded them: *If thou meet* Exod. 23. 4, 5.

meet thine Enemies Oxe or his Aſs going aſtray, thou ſhalt ſurely bring it back to him again; if thou ſee the Aſs of him that hateth thee, lying under his burden, and wouldſt forbear to help him, thou ſhalt ſurely help him. Nor were they only obliged to ſhew kindneſs to their Enemies Beaſts, but to their Perſons, in relieving their neceſſities, and ſupplying their wants. For *if thine Enemy hunger, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirſty, give him water to drink*: was given by *Solomon* in command to the *Jews*, a thouſand years before our Saviours manifeſtation in the fleſh. And

(as

(as I ſhall afterward have occaſion to ſhew) was highly commended by many Heathens. They therefore by the way are greatly miſtaken, who tell us, that to love, and to do good to our Enemies, is ſo peculiar to Chriſtianity, that it was altogether unknown to the World, before Chriſt taught it to his Diſciples.

We have ſeen with what ſtrong bonds our Hands, and our Tongues, and our Hearts too are tied up, either from doing, or ſpeaking, or ſo much as wiſhing any evil to any man, by way of return for the evil he hath done to us; ſince

this is not only frequently and earneſtly forbidden by the Laws of our Religion, but rather than avenge a former, we are commanded to expoſe our ſelves to a ſucceeding Injury; Yea, to be ſo far from repaying evil with evil, that on the contrary, we recompenſe evil with good.

Unleſs therefore we reſolve to go and do likewiſe, let us no longer think our ſelves Chriſtians. *Why call ye me Lord, Lord,* ſaith our Saviour, *and do not the things which I ſay?* Chriſt will own none for his Servants, but thoſe who obey his Commands; and

Luk. 6.46.

he

he wonders that others ſhould be ſo impudent, as to challenge him for their Maſter; for 'tis certain, that *his Servants we are to whom we obey.* Let us not then think well of our ſelves, for being Chriſtians in name, unleſs by our works, we ſhew our ſelves Chriſtians indeed; for ſo far are we from being the better for our holy Profeſſion, that we are in truth much the worſe, in caſe our practice be a contradiction to it. As therefore we deſire to approve our ſelves, what we profeſs to be, let us be ſo far from being overcome with evil, that Rom.6.16.

we overcome evil with good.

But if the bare Commands of Chriſt ſhould be ſlighted by us, yet methinks the Rewards promiſed to thoſe who obey them, and the Puniſhments threatened to thoſe who neglect them, ſhould be a powerful and prevailing Motive. And therefore,

Thirdly, Conſider, what great Rewards our Religion promiſes to thoſe who obſerve theſe Commandments, and what dreadful Puniſhments it threatens to thoſe who deſpiſe them. For *if we forgive men their treſpaſſes*, *our*

Matt. 6. 14.

our heavenly Father will alſo forgive us. A Promiſe comprehenſive of all the happineſs our hearts can wiſh; for *bleſſed is he whoſe iniquities are forgiven, whoſe ſins are covered: bleſſed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.* And this Bleſſedneſs, (ſaith the *Amen*, the true and faithful Witneſs) ſhall be the portion of thoſe, who heartily forgive the Offences of their Brethren. And for our greater aſſurance he repeats it again. *When ye ſtand praying, forgive, if ye have ought againſt any man, that your Father alſo which is in Heaven may forgive you your treſpaſſes.* Pſal. 32. 1, 2. Mar. 11. 25.

Not that we are ſo to underſtand this, as if to forgive our Enemies, without the concurrence of other Graces and Duties, were alone ſufficient to entitle a man to the forgiveneſs of his ſins (as ſome men may perhaps flatter themſelves, and thence conclude that they are ſafe, in caſe they do but forgive their Enemies, whatſoever other ſins they indulge to). No; how acceptable ſoever this is to God, we may not expect that it ſhould be of any avail in order to our everlaſting happineſs, unleſs it proceed from thoſe Chriſtian principles, which will ingage a man

man to the ſincere performance of all other Duties, and produce an entire Obedience to God's Commandments. That therefore the Reward is expreſly annexed to this Grace, 'tis not to exclude others; but to ſhew the excellency, and the abſolute neceſſity of this, how highly pleaſing it is to God, and what great influence it hath in order to the commending us to his Favour and Acceptance.

And as no leſs than Happineſs is the Reward promiſed to thoſe who obey theſe Commandments. So as great is the Puniſh-

ment threatned to thoſe
Matt. 6.15. that deſpiſe them. *For if*
Mar. 11.26. *we forgive not men their Treſ-*
paſſes, neither will our Father
which is in Heaven forgive
Jam. 2.13. *our Treſpaſſes.* Yea, *he ſhall*
have Judgement without Mer-
cy, who ſheweth no mercy.
What meaſure we mete to
others, God will at length
mete it to us again. If we
forgive our Neighbour, he
will forgive us. If we
ſhew mercy, we ſhall ob-
tain mercy. If we will
not forgive, neither will
God: If we recompenſe
to others their Offences a-
gainſt us, he will at laſt
recompenſe ours againſt
himſelf. And how inex-
preſſibly

preſſibly miſerable muſt that man be, with whom God will deal according to the merits of his Sins?

We have ſeen, that nothing can be more oppoſite to the nature and tendency of our Religion, than to repay injuries with injuries: That 'tis a manifeſt contradiction to thoſe Graces, which 'tis the chief deſign of our Religion to plant and promote in us; That it bids open defiance to many of its expreſs and moſt peremptory precepts; that 'tis threatened not only with temporal, but eternal Puniſhments; and that the greateſt Rewards

are

are promiſed to the contrary practice. Is it not a ſtrange thing, that perſons who are of a ſpiteful and revengeful temper, who are impatient of the leaſt neglect, who will not paſs by the moſt trifling Affront, who cannot be ſo much as civil, unleſs it be to thoſe who are ſo to them; who reſolve not to die in their Enemies debt, but to pay him home in his own coyn; is it not ſtrange, I ſay, that ſuch men as theſe, ſhould take themſelves for Chriſtians? But let them reckon themſelves ſuch as much as they pleaſe; while by their actions

actions they plainly contradict the Religion they pretend to, they do thereby but proclaim their Hypocriſie.

Nor ſhall we wonder that our Religion hath put in ſo many Prohibitions againſt this vice, and armed us with ſo many weapons to oppoſe and vanquiſh it; if we ſeriouſly conſider, what Impiety it involves toward God, how hurtful it is to our ſelves, how unreaſonable in reſpect of our Neighbour who hath wronged us, how deſtructive of humane Society; and conſequently how much it is condemned even

even by that Law which is written in every one of our hearts : which I now proceed to diſcourſe of in the order propos'd.

II. He that avenges himſelf on him that injures him, is highly impious toward God, and that upon two accounts eſpecially.

Firſt, Becauſe he ſacrilegiouſly uſurps God's peculiar Right. This Argument we find us'd by the Apoſtle in the next Verſe ſave one to my Text. *Dearly beloved*, ſaith he, *avenge not your ſelves , but rather give place unto wrath.* The wrath here

Rom. 12. 19.

here ſpoken of, may be either God's wrath, or our own, or that of our Adverſary. If we underſtand it of the wrath of God, the meaning is; Do not anticipate the Vengeance of God, but leave it to him to puniſh thoſe that harm you. If of our own wrath, the ſenſe is; Suffer it not preſently to break out into Revenge, but give it time to cool and expire, by a metaphor taken from matter ſuddenly inflamed and rarefied, which if pent up into a narrow compaſs, conſumes or ſhatters in pieces all that ſtands in its way; but give it room, and

and it ſpends it ſelf, and is extinguiſh'd without doing any miſchief. If we refer it to the wrath of our Enemy, the meaning is; Do not violently reſiſt it, but decline and flee from it; Or if that cannot be, bear it patiently, and do not return wrath for wrath. And why muſt we thus give place to wrath? the reaſon follows; becauſe it is written, *Vengeance is mine, I will repay, ſaith the Lord.* This we find written *Deut.* 32. 35. where God ſaith of himſelf, *To me belongeth Vengeance and Recompence.* And therefore the Pſalmiſt
Pſal. 94. 1. thus addreſſes to God, *O Lord*

Lord God to whom Vengeance belongeth, O God to whom Vengeance belongeth. So proper is Vengeance to God, that it belongs to none beſides him, except only thoſe, to whom he hath given ſpecial licence to execute it; that is, to publick Magiſtrates, and Superiors in Authority, who by virtue of their Office, are alſo Avengers: but what is inflicted by them, is to be accounted no other than the Vengeance of God, becauſe they as God's Miniſters are commiſſioned by him. Whoſoever therefore arrogates it to himſelf without authority deriv'd from God,

God, he invades his Prerogative, and ſets himſelf up in his room; he takes God's work out of his hand, as if he could do it better himſelf. Which how highly provoking it muſt needs be to a jealous God, who will not give his Glory to another, we may eaſily imagine.

But that we may not entertain any low and unworthy conceits of God, I add by way of Caution; that Vengeance as attributed to him, is to be taken in a benign and favourable ſenſe, for an act of diſtributive Juſtice, by which, as the Supreme and righteous Governour

Governour and Judge of the World; he rights thoſe that are wrong'd, and renders puniſhment to evil-doers, according to the merit of their works; abſtracting from all thoſe Perturbations and imperfections, from which it proceeds, and with which it is attended in us, by reaſon of which, we are altogether unfit to be our own Avengers.

Secondly, By avenging our ſelves, we are not only unjuſt to God, in uſurping his Rights; but guilty alſo of the moſt horrid Ingratitude, in not rendering

to him according to the Benefits we have received from him. How merciful is God to us ? how patient and long-ſuffering ? how many and great Indignities, do we daily offer to him ? how little or nothing are the greateſt Injuries, that the moſt potent and imbitter'd Enemy can do to us, in compariſon of our Offences againſt him, *who is the bleſſed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords* ? Should he be extream to mark our ſins againſt himſelf ; nay ſhould he recompenſe to us the Iniquities but of one day, the beſt of us would not be able

able to abide, but ſhould be cruſh'd into the bottomleſs Pit, under the unſupportable weight of his Vengeance. Yea, ſo far is he from puniſhing us after our ſins, and rewarding us according to our Iniquities, that he ſhowers down his bleſſings upon our heads, and daily loads us with his Benefits.

And what doth he expect from us by way of grateful Retribution? Why, that we ſhould be alſo kind and merciful to our Fellow-Servants, as he is to us; that we ſhould forgive their little offences againſt our ſelves, as he forgives our

great ones againſt himſelf. That God expects this, our Saviour hath plainly taught us in the parable of the King, who call'd his Servants to an account for what they owed him: For, what ſays the King to that Servant to whom he had forgiven ten thouſand talents, when he was ſo unmerciful to his Fellow-Servant, that he would not forgive him an hundred pence? *Thou wicked Servant, I forgave thee all that debt, becauſe thou deſiredſt me; ſhouldſt not thou alſo have had compaſſion on thy Fellow-Servant even as I had pity on thee?* Had God required ſome great matter

Matt. 18. 32,33.

matter of us, ſhould we not readily have done it ? ſince all that we can do, yea all that we can ſuffer too, falls incomparably ſhort of what we owe him ; When therefore he requires us in token of our Thankfulneſs, not to avenge our ſelves upon, but to forgive our injurious Brother (a thing ſo ſmall, ſo eaſie, ſo reaſonable, ſo infinitely below what he might juſtly exact from us) what Monſters of Ingratitude muſt we needs be, if we ſtick at this ?

We have heard how impious this practice is in reſpect of God ; how unjuſt in aſſuming to our ſelves,

what is proper to God only; how ungrateful, in refuſing to deny our ſelves ſo little by way of return, for thoſe innumerable and ineſtimable Benefits, he hath vouchſafed to us: If therefore we have any love for God, yea, if we have any reſpect or regard to him, ſhall we not abandon and abhor it for the future? and inſtead of heaping coals of Vengeance upon our Enemy's head to conſume him, heap only coals of love, which may ſoften and melt him.

III. But in caſe we ſhould have no regard to God,

God, yet 'twill be ſtrange if we have no love for our ſelves. I proceed therefore in the Third place to ſhew you, how great an evil it is to our ſelves, *to recompenſe evil for evil to any man.* For though we deſign to hurt our Enemies only, yet we are therein groſly miſtaken, ſince in hurting of them, we really do ſo much more miſchief to our ſelves, that our moſt invenomed and ſpiteful Adverſary cannot wiſh that worſe may befall us. For,

'Ακούσατε οἱ ἀνελεήμονες καὶ ὠμοὶ, ὅτι οὐχ ἑτέροις ἐστὲ ὠμοὶ, ἀλλ' ἑαυτοῖς. Ὅταν δὲ βούλῃ μνησικακεῖν, ἐννόησον ὅτι σαυτῷ μνησικακεῖς, οὐχ ἑτέρῳ. Chryſoſt. in Matth. c. 18. Hom. 62.

Firſt, He that repays an Injury, does the very ſame evil, with him who firſt inflicted it; and by conſequence involves himſelf in the ſame guilt, and makes himſelf as bad a man as he. The main thing in which they differ, is, that the one goes before the other; He that begins the wrong, leads the way, and is firſt in the tranſgreſſion; he that avenges it, follows after, and does the very ſame thing that he did before him.

That which he is wont to plead for the excuſing or leſſening of his crime is this;

this; that he is provoked to it by the wrong another hath already cauſeleſly done to him: Whereas this is in truth, ſo far from excuſing upon ſome accounts, that it rather aggravates his ſin, and renders him ſo much the more inexcuſable. For what's the reaſon, you are ſo angry with your Neighbour? Is it not becauſe you judge he hath done that which he ought not? becauſe he hath done that which is unbecoming a juſt and a good man to do? And will it think you, excuſe you, that you do that which your Neighbour hath done, becauſe it

is

is that which you believe he ought not to have done? Can you think your ſelves e're the more innocent, in imitating another in thoſe actions, which you your ſelves condemn as vile and unworthy? None can be ſo abſurd, ſo deſtitute of common ſenſe, as to imagine it.

This leſſon we may learn from many Heathens. One of them tells us, "That "we ought to do juſtice "not only to thoſe who "are juſt to us, but to thoſe "who injure us; leſt by

ὥσπερ ἓν δικαιοσύνης ποιεῖσθαι δεῖ λόγον, ἐ μόνον πρὸς τὲς δικαίως ἡμῖν προσφερομένυς, ἀλλὰ καὶ πρὸς τὲς ἀδικεῖν ἐγχειρῦντας, ἵνα μὴ τῷ ἀντιδικεῖν εἰς τὴν ἴσην κακεξίαν αὐτοῖς ἔλθωμεν. Hieroc. in Aur. Pythag. Car. p. 69.

"repaying

"repaying the wrong they "do, we make our ſelves "equally bad with them. Another ſays, "That if it be "evil to wrong a- "nother, 'tis a- "like evil to re- "taliate the wrong; "that is, he who "firſt does the in- "jury, does that "which is bad, "he that returns it "doth nothing bet- "ter. A third concludes, "That "ſince it is ſimply evil to "do an injury, therefore he "that hath ſuffer'd one, "muſt not avenge it, be- "cauſe

Εἰ τὸ ἀδικεῖν πονηρὸν, καὶ τὸ ἀνταδικεῖν, ὅμοιον· εἰ γὰρ τῷ ἁπάξαι πλεονεκτεῖ καὶ πονηρίαν ὁ ἀδικῶν, ἀλλὰ τῷ ἀμυνάσθαι ἐξισοῦται μὴ μοχθηρίαν ὁ ἀνταδικῶν. καὶ μὴν εἰ ὁ ἀδικῶν κακῶς ποιεῖ, ὁ ἀντιποιῶν κακῶς οὐδὲν ἧττον ποιεῖ, κακῶς κἂν ἀμύνηται. Max. Tyr. Diſſert. 2.

Plato in Crit.

"cauſe he of neceſſity does "an injury who retaliates "it. Yea ſome of the Philoſophers have gone ſo high, as to affirm, that if there be any difference between the one and the other, he that revenges the injury is of the two the more highly criminal. I ſhall be bold to affirm, ſayes *Maximus Tyrius*, "That "if there be an "exceſs of one in- "jury above ano- "ther, he that revenges, is "more unjuſt, than he "who was beforehand with "him in doing the wrong. And *Seneca* ſays, "I

Ἐπιτολμήσαιμι δ' ἂν ἔγωγε εἰπεῖν, ὅτι εἴπερ ἐστὶν ἀδικίας πρὸς ἀδικίαν ὑπερβολὴ, ὁ τιμωρῶν τοῦ προϋπάρξαντος ἀδικώτερος. Max. Tyr. Diſſert. 2.

"I ſhall not doubt to averr, "that he is more "wicked that a- "venges, than he "who began the "injury. One rea- ſon of which is manifeſt; becauſe he offers violence to his own Conſcience, before he can do ſo to his injurious Brother, by doing the very ſame evil himſelf, which he before condemn'd in him. Conſcience certainly cannot but tell him, that 'tis as a great ſin in him to wrong another, as 'tis in another to wrong him; that he is as much bound not to treſpaſs upon his Neighbours

Non dubitabo dicere, magis improbum eſſe eum, qui illatam ulciſcitur, quam qui infert injuriam. Sen.

bours Rights, as his Neighbour is bound not to treſpaſs upon his: When therefore either by words or actions, he returns that evil to his Neighbour, which he before condemn'd his Neighbour for doing to him, he muſt of neceſſity controll the dictates of his own Conſcience, and be ſelf-condemn'd. And what an intolerable wrong this is to himſelf (however inſenſible he may be of it at preſent) he will come to underſtand, when his Conſcience which is now debauch'd by falſe and fooliſh principles, and miſerably inſlav'd to his Paſſions and Luſts,

Luſts, ſhall once come to be diſabus'd and ſet at liberty; How will it then accuſe and upbraid and condemn him? what Vengeance will it then take, for all thoſe rude indignities he hath offer'd to it?

Secondly, By retorting of wrongs, we loſe many great and unvaluable Benefits, which by the patient indurance of them, we ſhould receive by the wrongs themſelves. "As thoſe Ani- "mals, ſays *Plutarch*, which "are moſt healthy, and of

ὥσπερ γὰρ τὰ ῥωμαλέα τοῖς σωμάσι καὶ ὑγιεινότατα τῶν ζώων, ὅσοις ἐσθίοντα καταπέπτει, καὶ σκορπίους· ἔστι δὲ ἃ καὶ λίθοις, καὶ ὀστράκοις τρέφεται, &c. Plut. de capiend. ab Hoſt. utilitat.

" a ſtrong ſtomach, digeſt
" Serpents and Scorpions;
" and ſome there are which
" turn Stones and Shells in-
" to nouriſhment; whereas
" thoſe that are weak and
" diſeas'd, do nauſeate even
" Bread and Wine: So fools
" corrupt and abuſe Friend-
" ſhip, whereas thoſe that
" are wiſe know how to
" make a good uſe of En-
" mity, and to turn it to
" their own advantage.
'Tis certain, there is no in-
jury ſo bad, but if we are
not wanting to our ſelves,
we may improve it to our
great gain. Your Enemy
perhaps has a ſpiteful eye
upon you, watches narrow-
ly

ly for your halting, puts a bad conſtruction upon your innocent words and actions, catches at every little fault he obſerves in you, and magnifies every mote into a beam: What ſhould you now do? I will tell you, or rather let a Heathen tell you (I mean *Plutarch*). "Inſtead "of doing ſo to "him again, be "more cautious "and circumſpect, "keep a ſtricter "watch over your "your ſelf, neither ſpeak "nor do any thing raſhly "and inconſiderately, amend "whatſoever hath been a-

Τοῦτο ἦν ὠφέλιμόν ὅτι πάνυ μὴ ἦν ἐυλαβέμενον ζῆν, ἢ προσέχειν ἑαυτῷ, &c. Plut. de cap. ab Hoſt. util.

"miſs, endeavour to out-
"do him in whatſoever is
"praiſe-worthy, be to him
"an example in Juſtice and
"Goodneſs, in thy Words
"irreproveable, in thy Ac-
"tions pure, *&c.* By this
"means, you will extract
"good out of evil, and
"make that which was
"deſign'd for your Diſeaſe,
"to become a ſovereign Me-
"dicine; You will out-
"wit and defeat your Ad-
"verſary, and make him
"ſore againſt his will to
"become your Friend.

Plut. ibid. And therefore *Diogenes*, when one asked him, by what means he might revenge himſelf on his Enemy;

my; Anſwer'd (more like a Chriſtian than a Heathen) "by being thy ſelf a virtuous "and good man.

Beſides, there is no injury you receive, but as it is deſign'd by God, ſo it is apt of it ſelf, to promote and exalt thoſe Graces, which are the Strength and Ornament, the Riches and Glory of a Chriſtian; ſuch I mean, as *Charity*, *Humility*, *Meekneſs*, *Gentleneſs*, *Patience*, *Long-ſuffering*, and the like. Theſe are all exercis'd by him who calmly ſuffers, and does not proudly throw back the injury; and by exerciſe they are ſtrengthened and brighten'd, made

more vigorous and illuſtrious.

And by improving in theſe Graces, we are render'd more like to the bleſſed Jeſus, who in the practice of theſe eſpecially, hath propoſed himſelf as a Pattern to us. Yea, we are made conformable to God over all bleſſed for ever; who glories chiefly in this, That *he is the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering and abundant in goodneſs, keeping mercy for thouſands, forgiving iniquity, tranſgreſſion and ſin.* And what ſhould we more ambitiouſly affect, than to reſemble the moſt glorious and infinitely bleſſed Being?

Exod. 34. 6, 7.

ing? Eſpecially when we conſider, that as we become more like him in Holineſs here, ſo we ſhall be alſo advanc'd to a greater likeneſs to him in Glory hereafter: for by how much the greater the injuries are, which for his ſake we meekly ſuſtain; by ſo much the greater ſhall be our Reward in Heaven, and the more glorious our Crown. In brief, ſo many, and ſo great are the Spiritual advantages for which we ſtand indebted to our Enemies, that Saint *Chryſoſtome* ſpeaks of it as a matter of admiration.

καὶ γὰρ μισθῶν εἰσιν ἡμῖν πρόξενοι οἱ διώκοντες. Chryſoſt. ad Rom. Hom. 22.

"See, ſays he, what great "Gains accrew to "thee by meekly "bearing of in- "juries. *Firſt*, "And which is in- "deed the great- "eſt, the Remiſ- "ſion of ſins. *Se-* "*condly*, Fortitude, "Patience and Perſeve- "rance. *Thirdly*, Meek- "neſs, Gentleneſs and Hu- "manity; For he that "knows not how to be an- "gry with thoſe who grieve "and afflict him, much "more will he be complai- "ſant to his Friends. *Fourth-* "*ly*, An uninterrupted calm "and tranquillity of mind, "to

Ὁρᾷ γοῦν ὅσα κερδαίνεις, πρῶτος τὰς τῶν ἐχθρῶν φέρων ἐπηρείας. πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ μέγιστον, ἁμαρτημάτων ἀπαλλαγή. δεύτερον, καρτερίαν καὶ ὑπομονήν, &c. Chryſoſt. in Matth. c. 18. Hom. 62.

"to which nothing is equal, "&c. So that we may juſtly conclude with the ſame Father; "That by how "much the more "injurious, by ſo "much the greater Benefactor "our Enemy is; "ſince the Good "we get by him "encreaſes, in proportion to "the evil we ſuffer from "him.

Μὴ τοίνυν λέγε, ὅτι ὕβρισε καὶ ἐδίωξε, καὶ μυρία εἰργάσατο κακά. ὅσα γὰρ ἂν εἴπῃς, τοσούτῳ μᾶλλον ἐπαινέσεις αὐτὸν εὐεργέτην. Chryſoſt. ibid.

Yea, which is yet more wonderful; Whereas the only thing we fear from our Enemies, is ſome outward evil, either in our Body, Goods or Name; a meek and charitable return to

the injury he hath done us, will not only defeat his malice, but on the contrary, will render it highly advantageous, by procuring to us that very Good, which alone it threaten'd us with the loſs of. How many Harms will this prevent? and keep us out of the reach of many formidable Dangers, which by the contrary courſe, we ſhould expoſe our ſelves to. Agreeable to which is that Story which *Seneca* tells us of an old Courtier: When one asked him, by what means he attain'd to old age, a thing ſo rarely met with in a Prince's Palace: He anſwer'd;

Sen. de ira, l. 2. c. 33.

anſwer'd; "By receiving "Injuries, and giving thanks "for them.

Illud quoque occurrat, quantum commendationis nobis allatura ſit clementiæ fama, & quam multos venia amicos utiles fecerit. Sen. de ira. l. 2. c. 34.

'Twill recommend us to the love and eſteem of all wiſe and virtuous perſons, ſince nothing is a more undoubted argument of a great and generous Soul; of one who hath gotten the maſtery over his own unruly Paſſions and Appetites, and is able to govern himſelf. And therefore *Solomon*

Magni animi eſt injurias deſpicere. Sen.

Nullum eſt argumentum magnitudinis certius, quam nihil poſſe, quo inſtigeris, accidere. l. 3. de ira.

Prov. 19. 11. *Iomon* tells us, *The Prudence of a man deferreth his anger, and it is his glory to paſs over a tranſgreſſion.*

'Twill render us amiable even to our Enemies; Yea, (as S. *Chryſoſtome* tells us) though they be very Devils, and will beget in them a venerable eſteem of us: And by conſequence, 'tis of all means the moſt powerful, for converting them from Enemies into Friends.

Ἀιδέσιμος ἔσῃ, κὴ ἀυτοῖς τοῖς ἐχθροῖς, κἂν δαίμονες ὦσι. Chryſoſt. in Matth. c. 18. Hom. 62.

Theſe are ſome of thoſe highly valuable Benefits, which a man reaps from injuries, who is of a charitable and

and forgiving temper; all which the angry and revengeful man deprives himſelf of: Nor does he only theſe and many more Advantages, but he alſo brings upon himſelf the contrary miſchiefs. For,

Thirdly, He chafes and inrages the ſmart and pain of the injury he hath already receiv'd, and renders it more intolerable. Whoſoever heartily forgives a wrong, he is no more diſquieted at the thoughts of it, 'tis to him as if it had never been; he is as well contented (that is, as happy a man) as if no ſuch evil had been done

to

to him: Whereas on the contrary, the man that meditates Revenge, he daily renews his own Grief, and makes it more ſharp and afflictive by putting new ſtings into it; He galls himſelf ſo much the more, by his impatient ſtruggling under his burden; He frets and inflames thoſe wounds, that would otherwiſe ſoon heal, and do well of themſelves; and ſo inſtead of wounding his Enemy, he vexes and torments his own ſoul; and as the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks in another caſe, *pierces himſelf thorow with many ſorrows.*

Nor does he only make the evil he already ſuffers, more

more painful and burthenſome; but which is worſe,

Fourthly, He provokes his Enemy to wrong him more, and uſually brings greater evils upon himſelf thereby. Revenge is both the Daughter, and the Mother of injury; the Daughter of that which went before it, the Mother of many that follow after: For an injury repaid, ſeldom fails to increaſe and multiply upon him that repays it, and that not only in the ſame kind, but in a worſe; by retaliating a reproachful word only, how often doth the Avenger expoſe himſelf

to

to Blows and Wounds, yea, frequently to Death it ſelf?

I know 'tis ſaid; That to paſs by one injury is the readieſt way to invite another. As fire is made the more outragious, by pouring upon it the ſofteſt oyl; ſo the calm bearing of the firſt Affront, inſtead of cooling, will only inflame the wrath of our Adverſary, and make him more intolerably inſolent.

'Tis true, this is ſaid; but by whom? by men of wild and ſavage tempers, who having put off humanity, are fit only to dwell in a Wilderneſs, and to aſſociate with Beaſts of prey. But as a Monſter

Monſter in nature, is no Argument againſt the regular courſe of things; ſo neither are ſuch Prodigies in morality, any prejudice to the common ſenſe and practice of mankind. What *Solomon* aſſerts from his own obſervation, has been always and ever will be found true in the general, *viz.* that *a ſoft Tongue breaketh the Bone*; that is, by gentle and good words, a perſon of the moſt churliſh and untractable temper is appeaſed and overcome. And if by words only, how much more, by kind and obliging Deeds? Inſtances of this nature, frequently occurr both in Profane and Sacred Hiſtory,

Prov. 25. 15.

ry, of which I ſhall at preſent mention but one, and that is King *Saul*. Scarce ever was any man more envious, and maliciouſly ſet againſt any man, than he was againſt *David*; yet when his evil Spirit was rais'd to the height, how was it charm'd and laid! how did he relent and diſſolve into tears, at the meek and humble words, and the unexpected kindneſs of *David* to him!

1 Sam. 24.

But what need I inſiſt upon particular Inſtances? I appeal to your own experience, whether any men are uſually ſo free from injuries? whether any lead ſo ſafe and quiet, and peaceable a life, as thoſe

thoſe who are moſt meek and patient, moſt good and gracious and ready to forgive?

For do but turn your eyes the other way, and you will ſoon have a diſmal and horrid Proſpect. Mark the malicious and behold the revengeful man, and you will find 'tis otherwayes with him. How often is he ſurrounded and aſſaulted with Dangers and Miſchiefs? how frequently is he ingaged in Quarrels and Frays? What *Solomon* ſays of the Drunkard, is as truly applicable to him: *Who hath wo? who hath ſorrow?* Prov. 23. 29. *who hath contention? who hath babling? who hath wounds with-*

out cauſe? who hath redneſs of eyes? he who is impatient of every abuſe, he who retaliates every injury. For by returning the evil, we provoke and inrage the evil-doer; and not only ſo, but we give him the ſame plea and pretence, for avenging himſelf upon us, that we before had, for avenging our ſelves upon him; and by this means, the evil will never ceaſe, but will be toſs'd backward and forward without end; and the further it proceeds, ſo much the more miſchievous and malignant will it grow.

Theſe are ſome of the evils, which the ſpiteful man brings

brings upon himſelf; and ſuch (one would think) as might be more than ſufficient to affright us to the greateſt diſtance from this ſin. And yet,

Fifthly, Theſe are ſo little, that they deſerve not to be mention'd, if compar'd with thoſe evils he brings upon himſelf from God; for by his Enmity againſt his Neighbour, he makes God an Enemy to himſelf, who will not entertain any thoughts of Reconciliation to him, till he be firſt reconciled to his offending Brother. Now God's ſore Diſpléaſure againſt him is manifeſt by the diſmal

fruits and effects of it. For,

1. So angry is God with him, that he will accept no worſhip from him; but all his moſt Religious ſervices ſhall be rejected as unclean, as long as he is out of charity with his Neighbour. This we are taught by our great Matt. 5. 23, 24. Maſter; *If thou bring*, ſaith he, *thy Gift to the Altar, and there remembreſt that thy Brother hath ought againſt thee*, for any injury thou haſt done him, *leave there thy Gift before the Altar*, do not dare to *preſent it to God, but go firſt and be reconciled to thy Brother*, (that is, do thy indeavour to appeaſe his anger, and to get him reconciled

led to thee) and after thou haſt ſo done, *then come and offer thy Gift.* And if God would not accept a Gift from him who had done an injury, till he had ſincerely indeavour'd to make ſatisfaction for it; would he not much rather have abhor'd it, if at the very time when he offer'd it, he deſign'd or wiſh'd any miſchief to his Neighbour?

And as all the Sacrifices of old were rejected, when ſowr'd with the leaven of malice in him that brought them; ſo as little acceptable will all our Chriſtian Sacrifices be, unleſs attended with Charity and Forgiveneſs in thoſe that offer them. For

Pſal. 18. 25, 26. as *with the merciful, God will ſhew himſelf merciful; ſo with the froward he will ſhew himſelf froward.*

I need not tell you, that he is no fit Gueſt for the Feaſt of Love, who harbours hatred in his heart againſt any man; ſince our Church in the Office for the holy Communion, hath expreſly forbidden all ſuch to approach the Lord's Table; ſuppoſing that the Cup of Bleſſing would to them be turn'd into a Cup of Wrath; and that they would eat Judgment to themſelves, inſtead of Mercy. But which is worſe: Not ſo much as any Prayer that is made by them (however fervent and im-

importunate) will ever be accepted; Yea, ſo far will it be from being acceptable, that it will be indeed an Abomination to the Lord.

Nor need we wonder at this; for, as the Father before quoted, reaſons: "If any one "who has offend-"ed thee who art "but a man, ſhould "humbly addreſs "to thee, and im-"plore thy Pardon, "and while he lay "proſtrate at thy feet, eſpy-"ing his Enemy, ſhould pre-"ſently leave off his ſuit to "thee, and fall foul upon "him; would he not in-"ſtead of atoning thee, pro-

Εἰ γὰρ ἀνθρώπῳ σοι ὄντι προσπλαθέντες ἀξιῶν ἐλεηθῆναι, εἶτα μεταξὺ κείμενον ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, εἶδεν ἐχθρὸν, καὶ ἀφεὶς σε ἱκετεῦσαι ἐκεῖνον ἔτυπτεν, &c. Chryſoſt. Hom. 20. in Matth.

" voke and inflame thy Diſ-
" pleaſure to a greater degree
"againſt him? If ſo, how much more reaſon is there, that God ſhould be angry with thoſe Prayers that are preſented by perſons of ſuch a malignant and wretched temper?

Yea ſhould ſuch perſons as theſe, not only offer up their Prayers to God, but their Blood too; ſhould they give
1 Cor. 13. 3. their Bodies to be burnt, die Martyrs to the true Religion, 'twould be a Sacrifice unacceptable to God. And in what a miſerable ſtate muſt that man be, all whoſe Prayers and Praiſes, and other moſt holy things are turn'd into ſin? And

And yet this is not the worſt, his miſery is ſtill greater. For,

2. As long as he refuſes to forgive his Brother, he puts a bar to the forgiveneſs of his own ſins. *He that revengeth* (ſaith the Son of *Sirach*) *ſhall find Vengeance of the Lord, and he will keep his ſins in remembrance; he ſheweth no mercy to a man which is like himſelf, and how doth he ask forgiveneſs of his own ſins? If he that is fleſh, nouriſh hatred, who will intreat for pardon of his ſins?* And (as I have already ſhew'd) our Saviour himſelf expreſly tells us, *that if we do not forgive, neither will our Father which is in Heaven, forgive our Treſpaſſes.* Eccl. 38. 1, 4, 5. Mar. 11. 26.

Yea,

Yea, when God gives us a Pardon, 'tis upon condition that we alſo pardon others. If therefore we fail in our part, our Pardon will be recall'd, and all our ſins will return again, in their full weight and vengeance upon our own heads, as our Saviour alſo teaches us *Matt.* 18.34,35. Now as the man is bleſs'd, *to whom the Lord will not impute ſin*; ſo how inexpreſſibly curs'd and miſerable muſt he be, upon whom the Lord will lay the guilt of his Iniquities? For,

3. The inevitable conſequence of this, is Loſs and Pain, endleſs and unſupportable. Such as in malice reſemble Devils in this world, they

they ſhall have their portion with Devils in the next; be everlaſtingly ſeparated from the preſence of God, (in whoſe preſence there is fulneſs of joy) and ſuffer the Vengeance of that eternal fire, which they themſelves by the coals of their Revenge have kindled. *And who can dwell with devouring fire? who can dwell with everlaſting burning?* If in their cool and ſober moods, they think the phantaſtick pleaſure of Revenge, a ſufficient Recompence for thoſe evils; let them ſtill go on, and gratifie their Diabolical appetite.

Sixthly, Nor can we think this hard meaſure from God, if

if we conſider, that it is no more, than what they themſelves daily pray for. For as often as they uſe the Lord's Prayer, or any other Prayer conformable to it, they pray to God for their own Damnation. The reaſon is obvious, becauſe we pray, *forgive us our Treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us*; that is, we ask the forgiveneſs of our ſins againſt God, but upon condition that we alſo forgive the treſpaſſes of our Brethren againſt our ſelves. If therefore we do not forgive, we in effect pray, that God would never forgive us, but deal with us according to the merits of our ſins.

And

And can the man who ſtudies Revenge, think of this without horrour and trembling? Can he think the Puniſhment his own ſin deſerves, ſo ſmall, that he can find in his heart to pray to God for it, rather than remit the Puniſhment of his Neighbours offences? If it be poſſible that any mans underſtanding ſhould at preſent be ſo darken'd, and his Conſcience ſo ſtupefied with the fumes of his inordinate Paſſions; yet when he ſhall feel the Vengeance which he now prays for; when he ſhall come to know experimentally what the wages of his ſins are, he will be ſufficiently ſenſible of the madneſs of his choice.

choice. How will he then rage againſt himſelf, and aggravate his own folly? How will he become his own Tormenter? and execute himſelf the Vengeance of God upon his own ſoul?

I might farther inlarge upon this Argument, but I think it needleſs. More than enough hath been already ſaid to convince you, that he who recompences evil to his Enemy, hath no Enemy in the world ſo bad as himſelf; that he brings more miſchiefs upon his own head, than 'tis in the power of any other, either men or Devils to do. Should we therefore be ſo impious as to have no regard to the Religion we profeſs, yet methinks we

we ſhould be powerfully ſway'd by our Intereſt. If for God's ſake we will not mortifie this Deviliſh Paſſion, yet ſhall we not do it for our own? Have we no compaſſion for our ſelves? Or can our Luſts ſo perfectly reconcile contradictions, as to make our Pains to become our Pleaſures? If not, we need not ſo much as deliberate; no man was ever yet ſo mad as to queſtion, whether he ſhould chuſe to be happy or miſerable.

It may perhaps ſeem ſuperfluous to add more Diſſuaſives from this ſin; for ſhould we be ſo monſtrouſly degenerated, as to contradict not only our Religion, but our Reaſon

Reaſon too; ſhould we be ſo far from approving our ſelves Chriſtians, as not to act like Men; yet in caſe we are not fallen below the Brute Creatures, the Arguments already propos'd will prevail with us; ſince there is not the vileſt of the Beaſts that periſh, that by the bare inſtinct of nature, does not ſhun thoſe things that are deſtructive of its own welfare.

Yet becauſe many men ſuppoſe they have a ſufficient plea for their Revenge, from the injuſtice of the perſon they take Revenge upon; becauſe however evil it may be in it ſelf, and however hurtful it may be to us, yet it is no more, they think, than what

is

is due to him; for what (ſay they) is more juſt and equal, than that a man ſhould reap as he ſows? that as he does to others, it ſhould be done to him again?

IV. I ſhall therefore proceed in the Fourth place to ſhew you, that Revenge is inhumane and unreaſonable, even in reſpect of the perſon who hath done us wrong. And that upon theſe three accounts eſpecially.

Firſt, Becauſe he is ſo nearly related to us by nature, and (if he be a Chriſtian) by Religion too. The man whom we are ſo highly incenſed againſt, is he not our

Brother? is he not of the ſame blood? does he not derive his Pedigree from the ſame common Parents with our ſelves? Now *Moſes* thought it a good Argument;
Act. 7. 26. *Sirs, ye are Brethren, why do ye wrong one to another?* And is not the Argument altogether as forcible, Sirs, ye are Brethren, Why do ye recompence wrong one to another?

'Tis true indeed, the cloſe union that is between us, ought to have kept him from doing us wrong, and therefore he is ſo much the more to blame for doing it; but ſuppoſing he has done it, it ſhould be alſo of equal force to withhold us from avenging it. If one foot ſhould be

ſo

ſo unkind as to kick the other, ſhall the other alſo be ſo unnatural as to return the blow? The reaſon is much the ſame in the Argument now before us. We are all members of one Body, or (as S. *Paul* expreſſes it) *we are members one of another*; and therefore 'tis as unreaſonable for us to recompence evil one to another, as 'twould be for the Members in the natural Body ſo to do. And ſo much the more monſtrous is it, becauſe, as the Apoſtle tells us, *if one member ſuffer, all the members ſuffer with it; or if one member be honoured, all the members rejoyce with it.* And therefore to do deſpite to our Neighbour, is in effect to be cruel to our

Ephes. 4. 24.

1 Cor. 12. 26.

ſelves; and to ſhew favour to him, is to be kind to our own fleſh. And ſince our Neighbour is ſo nearly united to us, is as it were a part of our ſelves, we may thence conclude,

Secondly, That the wrong he does to us, is ever to be imputed to ſome Weakneſs or Diſeaſe of Mind; either to Ignorance, or Paſſion, or ſome other Diſtemper he labours under; ſince we may well take it for granted, that were he truly himſelf, did he rightly underſtand and duly conſider what he does, he could never entertain a thought of hurting thoſe who are bone of his bone, and fleſh of his fleſh. As

As in the natural Body, no member creates any grief or pain to its fellow-member, unleſs it ſelf be firſt ſore or diſeas'd; ſo likewiſe in the Civil or Myſtical Body, the members that are ſound and healthful, are ſo far from breeding any annoyance to others, that they are all mutually uſeful and ſerviceable to each others good.

And is it not unreaſonable to repay that evil to our Neighbour, which had he been maſter of himſelf, he would have been ſo far from doing, that he would from his heart have abhorr'd the very thoughts of it? Should a man in a violent

Fever or Frenſie never ſo much abuſe us, ſhould we not think it an unmanly thing to fall foul upon him again? Should we not rather excuſe and pity him, ſaying, Alas, it is his diſtemper, he knows not what he does; if he live to come to himſelf, he will be heartily ſorry for it. And ſhall we not much rather have compaſſion for him, whoſe ſoul is darkened with Ignorance, inflam'd with Anger, puff'd up with Pride, rackt (it may be) with covetous and inſatiable deſires, diſaffected not in one, but in all its

Quis enim phrenetico Medicus iraſcitur? quis febricitantis & frigida prohibiti maledicta in malam partem accipit, &c. Sen. in Sap. non cadit Injur.

its Faculties, ſo that there is no ſound part to be found in it? And therefore inſtead of inflaming his Diſtemper, by returning the evil upon his own head, we ſhould rather by all mild and gentle applications, endeavour to remove it, and to bring him to a ſound conſtitution of Soul.

And in caſe our charitable endeavours this way prove ineffectual, and he ſtill perſiſts in his evil practices, and grow intolerably troubleſome and afflictive to us, there is one Remedy at hand of God's own appointment, which in ſuch a caſe we are allow'd to have recourſe to (not with

a deſign of doing the leaſt miſchief to him, but of ſecuring our ſelves from the miſchief he would do to us) I mean the Miniſters of publick Juſtice, whom God hath appointed to be the Phyſicians of the Body Politick, for the curing or cutting off ſuch diſeaſed members, that breed nothing but diſturbance and annoyance to their fellow-members. However 'tis certain, that his condition calls for our Pity rather than our Wrath, as is further evident, becauſe,

Thirdly, By the wrong he does to us, he does a far greater

greater injury to himſelf. He perhaps hurts our Body, but what is that to the wounding of his own ſoul? In ſeeking to rob us of our good name, he deprives himſelf of his Innocency and a good Conſcience. He makes ſome little treſpaſs upon our Lands; if he do it wittingly, without Reſtitution or Satisfaction, he will ſhut himſelf out of the Kingdom of Heaven. The miſchief he does to himſelf, ſo infinitely exceeds that he does to us, that there is no compariſon between them; And ſhall we

Ὥσπερ γὰρ ὑγείας ψυχῆς ἡ ἐυχὴ, ὡς δι' ἀναισθησίαν νομίζειν τὸν ἀδικούμενον μᾶλλον τῆς ἀδικέντων βλάπτεσθαι. ἐν μὴ γὰρ μόνον ἐστὶ τὸ ἀδικούμενον ἐκ παντὸς, ἡ ψυχὴ, &c. Hieroc. Fragment. Serm. 10.

we be ſo cruel as to wrong him more? No: rather by meekneſs and Patience, by kindneſs and Goodneſs, by friendly advice and counſel, let us teach him better things, and indeavour to bring him to a ſober mind.

You have heard how oppoſite it is to our Religion, how impious towards God, how hurtful to our ſelves, how inhumane with reſpect even to the Offender, *to recompence evil for evil.* I proceed now to the laſt general Head propos'd.

V. Nor is it leſs deſtructive of the Publick, than 'tis of the private Good, either of our

our ſelves, or our Neighbours; As it breaks the Peace, inverts Order, overturns Government, and ſhould it be generally practiſed, would introduce all the miſchiefs of War, Anarchy, and Confuſion.

'Tis a true ſaying, That 'tis the Second blow makes the Fray; for if the firſt be patiently born, no Quarrel enſues upon it, no more miſchief is done; but when that is return'd, a Civil War is preſently commenc'd, which by a ſucceſſive reciprocation of affronts and injuries, may perhaps be continu'd longer than the lives of thoſe who began it, and be deriv'd from them to their Poſterity.

Though

Plut. de capiend. ab hoſt. utilitat.

Though there are ſome Places that are not infeſted with any ſort of wild Beaſts, (as 'tis reported of *Crete*) Yet ſince the World was never brought to ſo good a paſs, that any Countrey could be found, that is free from Hatred, Variance, Emulation, Wrath, Strife; but in all publick Societies, there have ever been no ſmall number of covetous and rapacious, of proud, contentious and ill-temper'd perſons, who have been too apt to give provocations; if every one that is provok'd, ſhould purſue Revenge, all Peace would ſoon be at an end, all humane Society would diſſolve; from men we ſhould be transform'd into ravenous

ravenous Beaſts, that would mutually bite and devour one another.

Nor can it be imagin'd how this miſchief ſhould be prevented, if every man ſhould take upon himſelf to be a Judge and an Avenger in his own cauſe: For in caſe he that apprehends himſelf wrong'd, will needs be a Judge; by the ſame reaſon, he that does the wrong, may aſſume to himſelf the ſame authority: And if every man be his own Judge, their determinations will be as contradictory as their Judgements, and their Judgements as their Prejudices and Paſſions and Intereſts; and ſo the War muſt of neceſſity be endleſs.

The

The Summ is this: In caſe we were permitted every man to be our own Avengers, then, 1. There would be no place left for the Office of the publick Magiſtrate. 2. Every private perſon would aſcend the Tribunal and the Throne, and become a Law-giver and a Judge in his own cauſe. 3. We ſhould then have as many unſubordinate and Supreme Judges, as there are particular perſons in the World, who do and repay wrongs one to another. 4. Their Judgments would be as contradictory to each other, as their Affections and Intereſts. 5. Their Reſolutions and Determinations would be as contradictory as their

their Judgments. And therefore, 6. They could never come to an agreement among themſelves, but muſt be in a perpetual ſtate of War. From whence would follow in the concluſion, the diſſolution of all humane Society. For if every man who is ſuppoſed at any time to do any kind of injury either in word or deed; and every man who ſuppoſes himſelf to have receiv'd any ſort of injury, ſhould riſe up one againſt another, and take upon them to avenge themſelves; their number would be ſo great, as to put the World into confuſion, and render it an habitation fitter for Wolves and Tigers, than for men.

As

As therefore we deſire not to be the Diſturbers and Deſtroyers of the publick Peace, let us give check to all deſires of Revenge; ſince the more theſe are indulg'd, ſo much the more will the peace be broken. And therefore the Apoſtle having in the *Verſe* next after my Text, commanded us, *as much as in us lies, to live peaceably with all men*; he immediately adds, as a means in order to this end, and as that without which we can never attain to it, *not avenging your ſelves.*

FINIS.

ERRATA.

Page 42. l. 20. read *was pleas'd.* p. 71. l. 6. r. *, that upon ſome account, it.* p. 73. l. ult. r. *it*; marg. l. 6. r. ἀμύνασθαι ἑξιοῦντας κατὰ. p. 75. l. 17. r. *as great a* p. 87. at l. 4. inſert the firſt *Note.* p. 89. l. 5. r. *ly loſt.*